

Money for your school for healthy snacks - Applications due in March

Your school may be eligible to apply for participation in the newly expanded Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for school year 2008-09. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is to provide fresh vegetable and fruit snacks to children throughout the school day.

We received news on January 29 confirming that South Dakota will be able to expand the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to 25 more schools in South Dakota. The 2008 Omnibus Appropriation Act that the President signed on December 26 included \$9.9 million for expanded funding to states that were not participating yet. South Dakota already have 10 schools in the Pine Ridge area participating as provided for under previous legislation. We will add 25 more schools. You can read about the FFVP on our website at <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/cans/FFVP/index.asp>. The application will be available at that site by February 8, 2008 for schools to access for completion. We will mail or fax a copy of the application to any School Food Authority that requests it if they cannot access it. Call 773-3413 to obtain an application if you cannot access it after February 8.

It is important to note that legislation currently being discussed by Congress could have some additional effect on the future scope of the FFVP, but it will not affect the current appropriation for the 08-09 school year. This Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is not the same as the fresh produce that schools can order as a part of their USDA donated commodities for use in the School Lunch and Breakfast Program. Schools that receive awards or grants through other programs that support the fresh fruit and vegetables, such as the Team Nutrition Grant, are still eligible to apply for the federal Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

This is to give you a heads up to start considering your application. It will likely be due in early March. This grant is for fresh fruits and vegetables, not canned or frozen. A limited amount of dried fruit or vegetables is allowable. It is open competition. We expect information that is more specific in a conference call with USDA soon. Funding per school will depend upon the number of students in schools that receive the grant across the nation.

What is in it for the school?

- Receive funds allocated to the state to provide fresh fruits and vegetables daily outside of the lunch and breakfast programs;
- Receive reimbursement for purchasing, preparing, and serving the fresh fruits and vegetables;
- May use 10% of the allocation for administrative costs;
- Local decision on how, when, and where it will be implemented
 - before, during, or after school
 - classrooms, commons areas, or other sites are allowable;
- Local decision on what products to offer;
- Allows creativity to implement and operate the program
- School staff are encouraged to participate in the program as long as they do not abuse it.

What are the school responsibilities and requirements?

- Must participate in the National School Lunch Program;
- Agree to make fresh fruits and vegetables available at no charge to all children at sites identified in the approved grant;
- Let the children and parents of the school know about the program;
- Comply with the guidelines including procurement rules;
- Should have a high number of lower-income children;
- Submit implementation plans that include outside support or collaboration with state, local, or private partners;
- Submit monthly claims for reimbursement showing actual expenditures for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

We expect application questions to focus on

- How you would expect to operate the program in your school;
- How your students would benefit;
- Who would be involved in program operation in the school;
- Who your out-of school partners might be;
- How you would incorporate nutrition education into this;
- How you could incorporate the FFVP into existing programs, classes, and activities;
- How you would market this program; and
- What existing resources you can use and what you might need to make it work.

This effort will need the approval of the superintendent or equivalent position of the school, the principal, and the food service department. It takes cooperation the whole team – adding in teachers, aides, support staff, custodians, and the bus drivers if you are sending snacks home on the bus - to make the program successful. Grant recipients will be required to attend a program workshop to be held after the selection process. Cost of attending the workshop would be allowable administrative expenses.

We will keep you posted as we hear more. We will email the notice to authorized representatives and food service directors when the application is available. It is time to start thinking about whether you want to apply and gather information to complete your application.

Contact Janelle at 280-4278 if you have questions regarding this program.